

The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division, of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for the Youth Ambassadors Program with Canada, Central America, and the Caribbean. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to recruit and select youth and adult participants, to provide the participants with three-week exchanges focused on civic education, community service, and youth leadership development, and to support follow-on projects in their home communities.

Exchange delegations will travel from up to 24 countries in North America, Central America, and the Caribbean to the United States, and U.S. exchange delegations will travel to selected countries. ECA anticipates awarding multiple cooperative agreements that cover the administration of this program for two years.

**I. Funding Opportunity Description:**

**Authority:**

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The

funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

**Overview:**

The Youth Ambassadors Program is a three-week exchange for high school youth (ages 15-18) and adult educators focused on civic education, community service, and youth leadership development. Subthemes that explore these overarching themes may be added, such as the environment or business and entrepreneurship. Participants engage in a variety of activities such as workshops on leadership and service, community site visits related to the program themes and subthemes, interactive training, presentations, visits to high schools, local cultural activities, civic education programming in Washington, D.C. or the capital city of the partner country, and other activities designed to achieve the program's stated goals. Multiple opportunities for participants to interact meaningfully with their peers of the host country must be included. Follow-on activities with the participants are an integral part of the program, as the students apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired to plan service projects in their home communities.

The FY 2012 Youth Ambassadors Program will focus on countries in North America, Central America, and the Caribbean, and includes: Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States. It may include participants from: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The majority of participants will be foreign students traveling to the United States, while a smaller number of American participants will travel to selected countries.

The goals of the program are to:

- 1) Promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of Central America, the Caribbean, and Canada;
- 2) Prepare youth leaders to become responsible citizens and contributing members of their communities;
- 3) Influence the attitudes of the leaders of a new generation; and
- 4) Foster relationships among youth from different ethnic, religious, and national groups and create

hemispheric networks of youth leaders, both within the participating countries and internationally.

The objectives of the program are for participants to:

- 1) Demonstrate a better understanding of the elements of a participatory democracy as practiced in the United States;
- 2) Demonstrate critical thinking and leadership skills; and
- 3) Demonstrate skill at developing project ideas and planning a course of action to bring the projects to fruition.

The primary themes of the program are:

- 1) Civic Education (Citizen Participation, Grassroots Democracy and Rule of Law);
- 2) Community Service; and
- 3) Youth Leadership Development.

For each project, applicant organizations must focus on one or more of the primary themes listed above. The applicant organization must also propose a secondary theme that will serve to illustrate the more abstract concepts of the primary themes. Suggested secondary themes include, but

are not limited to, the environment and climate change, entrepreneurship, substance abuse prevention, and alternatives to violence. The secondary theme should be integrated into most aspects of the program, including workshops, presentations and community service.

Using these goals, objectives, and themes, applicant organizations must identify their own specific and measurable outputs and outcomes based on the project specifications provided in this solicitation. ECA does not anticipate award recipients achieving these overarching goals throughout one project; however, proposals should indicate how these objectives will be reached through these themes, and how they will contribute to the achievement of the stated goals.

**Project Options:**

The total amount of funding available is \$2,475,000. ECA anticipates awarding multiple cooperative agreements for the management of the Youth Ambassadors Program with Canada, Central America, and the Caribbean that together will cover up to 24 countries. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal project configurations, budgets, and participant numbers in

accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. In addition, the Bureau reserves the right to adjust the participating countries should conditions change in the partner country or if other countries are identified as Department priorities.

Organizations may apply for one or two of the options outlined below, but must submit only one proposal under this competition. Multiple submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will not be considered further in the review process. These options will allow applicants the flexibility to propose working with the countries in which they have the best infrastructure. The Bureau strongly urges organizations to focus their applications on countries where they have the strongest organizational capacity. The applicant must thoroughly describe this capacity in the proposal. Please note the total approximate funding for each option.

**Option 1: Canada (approximately \$250,000)**

A project conducted in English for Canadian citizens. Approximately 30-40 participants will take part in the program with 15-20 traveling to the United States each year. Recruitment will focus on new Canadians [first

generation Canadians and Canadians born outside Canada], members of the First Nations, and multi-generational Canadians.

**Option 2: Haiti (approximately \$300,000)**

A single-country program conducted in French for 35-50 participants from Haiti; 17-25 participants will travel to the United States each year. Participants will not need English skills to participate; applicants should propose programming in the French language or provide for interpretation.

**Option 3: Central America and the Dominican Republic (approximately \$1,575,000)**

Two projects: One conducted in Spanish for participants from Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Panama and one conducted in English for participants from Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Applicants may apply for one or both projects.

Additional information for option three:



- Approximately 15-20 participants from each country will travel to the United States during the award period, approximately 7-10 each year.
  - o Though award recipients must receive delegations that include participants from at least two countries, not all delegations must travel to the United States at the same time. For example, an applicant could propose to send participants from Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic to the U.S. for one exchange and then plan for a second exchange for participants from Guatemala and Panama.
  - o Applicants who plan to send large delegations (over 30 participants) to the United States at one time must propose a plan to break the delegation into smaller cohorts for most of the exchange activities. This will ensure that all participants actively take part in the exchange and that program staff can adequately monitor the safety and well-being of the participants. For example, the applicant could propose to divide a large group into several multi-country teams.

Applicants are encouraged to hold the welcome and closing orientations with the entire delegation.

- In addition to the Central American and Dominican participants, each project will also have an exchange of Americans participants to the region. For each project an applicant proposes, the applicant should plan for 17 to 25 participants from the United States to travel to at least two of the participating countries. Applicants should propose the countries where they can provide the most comprehensive programming for the Americans. This exchange may take the form of one or two travelling delegations. A single delegation could travel to both selected countries, or one delegation could visit one selected country one year and a second delegation could visit the other selected country the following year. American participants in the Spanish language exchange project should have conversational Spanish skills. Applicants are encouraged to be creative and flexible in making arrangements that will meet the program goals.
- ECA may award more than one cooperative agreement from this option. An applicant applying for the Spanish-

language project must include all four countries listed above in its proposal; the same is true for those applying for the English project. The funding request for one project should be about half the amount available indicated above, approximately \$790,000. Applicants applying for both projects must include all countries listed above and should submit only one proposal. Applicants applying for both projects may also apply for an additional option under this competition but should submit only one proposal. Applicants should apply for those countries where they have a strong organizational capacity with their in-country partners.

**Option 4: Caribbean (approximately \$350,000)**

A project conducted in English for participants from the Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. Approximately 10-15 participants from each country will travel to the United States during the award period, approximately 5-8 each year.

- Though award recipients must receive delegations that include participants from at least two countries, not all delegations must travel to the United States at

the same time. For example, an applicant could propose to send participants from the Bahamas, Barbados, and Guyana to the U.S. for one exchange and then plan for a second exchange for participants from Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

- Applicants who plan to send large delegations (over 30 participants) to the United States at one time must propose a plan to break the delegation into smaller cohorts for most of the exchange activities. This will ensure that all participants actively take part in the exchange and that program staff can adequately monitor the safety and well-being of the participants. For example, the applicant could propose to divide a large group into several multi-country teams. Applicants are encouraged to hold the welcome and closing orientations with the entire delegation.

For this project, the U.S. Embassies in the participating countries will serve as the in-country partners and recruit and select the participants. Proposals should note the applicant's willingness to work with the Program Office and participating U.S. Embassies to finalize proposed country

groupings and dates for the exchanges once an award is made.

Please note that U.S. Embassy Bridgetown, Barbados, serves several eastern Caribbean countries and the participants U.S. Embassy Bridgetown selects may come from any of the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and/or St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

**Participants:**

Both the American and international youth and adult participants must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- 1) Be citizens of the country from which they are applying (dual U.S. citizens are not eligible);
- 2) Be selected through a merit-based competition;
- 3) Represent the diversity of their home country; and
- 4) Demonstrate an interest in the partner country and the project themes.

Criteria for selection of the participants will include leadership skills, an interest in service to the community, strong academic and social skills, openness and

flexibility. To reach beyond the elite, participants should be recruited from underserved or disadvantaged populations of youth in these countries, including public high schools. Geographic, socio-economic, and ethnic diversity is important, including outreach to indigenous and Afro-descendant populations. It is desirable that a few participants live in the same community to facilitate future collaboration upon their return to their home country.

The youth participants must be high school students aged 15 to 18 years old, with at least one semester of high school remaining. The adult participants may be teachers, trainers, school administrators, and/or community leaders who work with youth. They will have the role of chaperone, exchange participant, and post-exchange mentor. The ratio of youth to adults should be approximately 10:1, depending on the size of the exchange delegation.

For the Canada, Central American, and Caribbean projects that will be conducted in English, the participants must have sufficient English language proficiency to participate fully in interactions with their host families and their peers and in educational activities. The Central America

project conducted in Spanish and the Haiti project in French do not require English-speaking participants. For the U.S.-based activities that will be conducted in Spanish or French, the award recipient must provide interpretation and must place participants who speak no English with host families where at least one member speaks Spanish or French. Spanish language ability is required for the American participants traveling to the Spanish-language project countries and is strongly recommended for the Americans traveling to the English-language project countries that speak Spanish, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras.

**Organizational Capacity:**

Applicant organizations must demonstrate their capacity for conducting international youth exchanges, focusing on three areas of competency: (1) provision of projects that address the goals, objectives, and themes outlined in this document; (2) age-appropriate programming for youth; and (3) previous experience working on programs in the region. Organizations must demonstrate their capacity to manage a complex, multi-phase program with several separate exchange projects.

In addition to their U.S. presence, applicants for the Canada, Central America and Dominican Republic, or Haiti projects must have the organizational capacity in the relevant countries through their own offices or through a partner organization or institution to recruit and select participants for the project, to provide follow-on activities, and to organize a content-rich program for the U.S. participants, if specified. It is vitally important that the applicant have a viable, experienced in-country partner. Applicants should consult with their partners and involve them in the preparation of the proposal. Before submitting a proposal, applicants may consult with Public Affairs Sections in U.S. Embassies for suggested partner organizations or concerning the selection and reliability of in-country partner organizations. Please e-mail ECA Program Officer Jennifer Phillips (PhillipsJA@state.gov) for Embassy contact information.

**U.S. Embassy Involvement:**

It is important that the proposal narrative clearly state the applicant's commitment to consult closely with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in the host country to develop plans for project implementation, including recruitment, selection and orientation of



participants, publicity events, and follow-on activities, when applicable, once a cooperative agreement is awarded. In countries where there is a reciprocal component involving U.S. citizen minors, the U.S. Embassy will provide oversight and monitoring; concur on housing arrangements, including host family locations (regions, neighborhoods); represent the U.S. Government while the exchange activities are taking place in the host country; and assist program staff and participants in the event of an emergency. At the same time, the cooperative agreement requires that the administering organization must be able to manage the program in the host country in its entirety, with little reliance on embassy staff for support. For the Caribbean project only, the U.S. Embassies in the partner countries will serve as the in-country partner.

**Guidelines:**

It is anticipated that the cooperative agreement will begin on or about July 1, 2012. The award period will span approximately two years, and will cover all aspects of the programming in Canada, Central America and the Dominican Republic, Haiti and the United States - recruitment, selection, and orientation of the participants, international travel, three weeks of exchange activities,

and support of follow-on activities. For the Caribbean the award will cover international travel and three weeks of exchange activities in the United States. Planning and preparation will start in 2012, and the exchanges will take place at various points throughout 2013 and 2014.

Applicants should propose the period of the exchanges in their proposals, but the exact timing of the project may be altered through the mutual agreement of the Department of State and the recipient. In addition, while the second year of the award period may build on lessons learned from the first year, proposals should include a plan for keeping the essential elements of the exchange, from project themes to regional groupings, the same in the second year.

The award recipient will be responsible for the following:

Recruitment and Selection: Manage the recruitment and merit-based selection of youth and adult participants in cooperation with the Public Affairs Sections of the U.S. Embassies in the participating countries. Once a cooperative agreement is awarded, the recipient must consult with the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy to review a participant recruitment and selection plan and to determine the degree of Embassy involvement in the

process. Organizers must strive for regional, socio-economic, and ethnic diversity, as well as gender balance. For reciprocal projects sending U.S. participants to Central America and the Dominican Republic, the recipients must manage the recruitment and open, merit-based selection of U.S. participants. The Department of State and/or its overseas representatives will have final approval of all selected delegations. This section does not apply to the Caribbean project.

Orientations: Provide orientations for exchange participants and for those participating from the host communities, including host families. For the Caribbean, the U.S. Embassy will conduct the orientation with program-specific information the award recipient provides.

Logistics: Manage all logistical arrangements, including passport and visa applications, international and domestic travel, ground transportation, accommodations, interpretation, group meals, and disbursement of stipends.

Exchange Activities: Design and plan three weeks of exchange activities that provide a creative and substantive program to develop both the youth and the adult

participants' knowledge and skill base in civic education, community service, and youth leadership development. The exchange will take place in the capital city (Washington, D.C. or that of the host country) and in one or two other communities. The exchanges will focus primarily on interactive activities, practical experiences, and other hands-on opportunities that provide a substantive project on the specified program themes. Some activities should be school and/or community-based, and the projects will involve as much sustained interaction with peers of the host country as possible (for both the youth and adult participants). Cultural, social, and recreational activities will balance the schedule.

Accommodations: Arrange home stays for the participants in the United States with properly screened and briefed American families for the majority of the exchange period. In the partner countries, home stays are strongly desired whenever feasible with properly screened and briefed Central American or Dominican families. Criminal background checks must be conducted for members of host families (and others living in the home) who are 18 years or older.

Monitoring: Develop and implement a plan to monitor the participants' safety and well-being during the exchange and to create opportunities for participants to share potential issues and promptly resolve them. The award recipient will be required to provide proper staff supervision and facilitation to ensure that the teenagers have safe and pedagogically rich programs. Staff, along with the adult participants, will assist the youth with cultural adjustments, provide societal context to enhance learning, and counsel students as needed. For the safety and security of both foreign and American participants, applicants must comply with the monitoring and supervision requirements, as well as the host family screening requirements, outlined in the POGI.

Follow-on Activities and In-Country Programming: Plan and implement activities in the participants' home countries, particularly by facilitating continued engagement among the participants, advising and supporting them in the implementation of community service projects, and offering opportunities to reinforce the ideas, values and skills imparted during the exchange. Exchange participants should return home from the exchange prepared to conduct projects that serve a need in their schools or communities. To

amplify program impact, proposals should present creative and effective ways to address the project themes, for both program participants and their peers. Follow-on activities could include a plan for awardee staff to travel to the partner countries to conduct additional training and facilitate the development and delivery of the participants' follow-on projects.

Evaluation: Design and implement an evaluation plan that assesses the short- and medium-term impact of the project on the participants as well as on host and home communities.

**Please note:**

The ECA awards for the Youth Ambassadors Program will take the form of cooperative agreements with the award recipients. In a cooperative agreement, the Department of State is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine grant monitoring. The Department's activities and responsibilities for the Youth Ambassadors Program are as follows:

- 1) Provide advice and assistance in the execution of all program components.

- 2) Facilitate interaction within the Department of State, to include ECA, the regional bureaus, and overseas posts.
- 3) Arrange meetings with Department of State officials in Washington, D.C. and the partner countries.
- 4) Approve the final candidate selection and alternates.
- 5) Issue DS-2019 forms and J-1 visas for the foreign participants. All foreign participants will travel on a U.S. Government designation for the J Exchange Visitor Program.
- 6) Approve applications, publicity materials, and final calendar of exchange activities.
- 7) Approve housing arrangements, including the host family locations (in Central America and the Dominican Republic only).
- 8) Monitor and evaluate the program, through regular communication with the award recipient and possibly one or more site visits.
- 9) For the Caribbean project only, the U.S. Embassies will serve as the in-country partner and manage the recruitment and selection of the Caribbean participants, cover their in-country expenses, and oversee their follow-on activities.

**Additional Information:**

Award recipients will retain the name "Youth Ambassadors Program" to identify their project. All materials, publicity, and correspondence related to the program will acknowledge this as a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. The Bureau will retain copyright use of and be allowed to distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

The organization must inform the ECA Program Officer of its progress at each stage of the project's implementation in a timely fashion, and will be required to obtain approval of any significant program changes in advance of their implementation.

The proposal must demonstrate how it will meet the stated objectives. The proposal narrative should provide detailed information on the major project activities, and applicants should explain and justify their programmatic choices. Projects must comply with J-1 visa regulations for the International Visitor and Government Visitor category. Please be sure to refer to the complete Solicitation Package - this RFGP, the Project Objectives, Goals, and



Implementation (POGI), and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) - for further information.

## **II. Award Information:**

**Type of Award:** Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under Section I above.

**Fiscal Year Funds:** FY-2012

**Approximate Total Funding:** \$2,475,000

**Approximate Number of Awards:** two to five

**Approximate Average Award:** \$500,000

**Floor of Award Range:** \$250,000

**Ceiling of Award Range:** \$1,925,000

**Anticipated Award Date:** July 1, 2012

**Anticipated Project Completion Date:** 24-34 months after start date, to be specified by applicant based on project plan

## **III.) Eligibility Information:**

**III.1. Eligible applicants:** Applications may be submitted by public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

**III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds:** There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition.

However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

**III.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:**

a) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international

exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making multiple awards in amounts greater than to \$130,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition. The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

b.) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the following or they will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

- Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal in this competition.
- If more than one proposal is received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process. **Please note:** Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined

in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

#### **IV.) Application and Submission Information:**

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

##### **IV.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package:**

Please contact the Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY/T, SA-5, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, tel. 202-632-6363, [PhillipsJA@state.gov](mailto:PhillipsJA@state.gov), to request a Solicitation Package.

Please refer to the Funding Opportunity Number ECA/PE/C/PY-12-33 located at the top of this announcement when making your request.

Alternatively, an electronic application package may be obtained from [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Please see section IV.3f for further information.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission

Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify ECA/PE/C/PY/T and Program Officer Jennifer Phillips and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number ECA/PE/C/PY-12-33 located at the top of this announcement on all other inquiries and correspondence.

**IV.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet:**

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at

<http://exchanges.state.gov/grants/open2.html>, or from the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Please read all information before downloading.

**IV.3. Content and Form of Submission:**

Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under IV.3f. "Application Deadline and Methods of Submission" section below.

IV.3a. You are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a DUNS number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access <http://www.dunandbradstreet.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your DUNS number is included in the appropriate box of the SF - 424 which is part of the formal application package.

IV.3b. All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative and budget.

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

IV.3c. All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in the CCR until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. Failure to register in the CCR will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a

copy of relevant portions of this form.

Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure



to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

IV.3d. Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

IV.3d.1 **Adherence To All Regulations Governing The J Visa**

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is the official program sponsor of the exchange program covered by this RFGP, and an employee of the Bureau will be the "Responsible Officer" for the program under the terms of 22 CFR 62, which covers the administration of the Exchange Visitor Program (J visa program). Under the terms of 22 CFR 62, organizations receiving awards (either a grant or cooperative agreement) under this RFGP will be third parties "cooperating with or assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the sponsor's program." The actions of recipient organizations shall be "imputed to the sponsor in evaluating the sponsor's compliance with" 22 CFR 62. Therefore, the Bureau expects that any organization receiving an award under this competition will render all assistance necessary to enable the Bureau to fully comply with 22 CFR 62 et seq.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by recipient organizations and program participants to all regulations governing the J visa program status. Therefore, proposals should explicitly state in writing that the applicant is prepared to assist the Bureau in meeting all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62. If your organization has experience as a designated Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, the applicant should discuss their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et. seq., including the oversight of their Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://exchanges.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division  
U.S. Department of State  
ECA/EC/D/PS, SA-5, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
2200 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037

#### IV.3d.2     **Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines**

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disabilities. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section for specific suggestions on

incorporating diversity into your proposal. Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

#### **IV.3d.3. Program Monitoring and Evaluation**

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the

program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this RFGP.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for

information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the RFGP (listed here in increasing order of importance):

- **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
- **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
- **Participant behavior**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new

knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.

- **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

**Please note:** Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

IV.3e. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

IV.3e.1. Applicants must submit SF-424A - "Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs" along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

IV.3e.2. Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- Staff travel



- Participant travel (international, domestic, ground transportation, passport and visa fees)
- Orientations
- Cultural and social activities
- Meeting costs
- Lodging, when not in homestay
- Living allowance for host families (in Central America and Dominican Republic only)
- Food (primarily group meals)
- Interpreters, if necessary
- Follow-on activities
- Evaluation
- Pocket money for participants' incidental expenses
- Other justifiable expenses directly related to supporting program activities

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

IV.3f. Application Deadline and Methods of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: April 4, 2012

Reference Number: ECA/PE/C/PY-12-33

#### Methods of Submission:

Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Find" portion of the system.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov

Please follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this RFGP to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your

internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: Monday - Friday, 7AM - 9PM Eastern Time

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation.

Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

**It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their**

**entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.**

IV.3g. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

## **V. Application Review Information**

### **V.1. REVIEW PROCESS**

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical

authority for assistance awards cooperative agreements resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

#### **REVIEW CRITERIA**

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

**1. Quality of the program idea:** The proposed program should be well developed, respond to design outlined in the solicitation, and demonstrate originality. It should be clearly and accurately written, substantive, and with sufficient detail. Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission.

**2. Program planning:** A detailed agenda and work plan should clearly demonstrate how project objectives would be achieved. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above and in the POGI. The substance of workshops, seminars, presentations, school-based activities, and/or site visits should be described in detail. Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. The proposal should clearly

demonstrate how the organization will meet the program's objectives and plan.

**3. Support of diversity:** The proposal should demonstrate the recipient's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity in program content. Applicants should demonstrate readiness to accommodate participants with physical disabilities.

**4. Institutional capacity and track record:** Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals. The proposal should demonstrate an institutional record, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau grants as determined by the Bureau's Office of Contracts. The Bureau will consider the past performance.

**5. Program evaluation:** The proposal should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The proposal should include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The award recipient will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded.

**6. Cost-effectiveness and cost sharing:** The applicant should demonstrate efficient use of Bureau funds. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. The proposal should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions, which demonstrates institutional and community commitment.

#### **VI.) Award Administration Information**

##### **VI.1a. Award Notices:**

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive an Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and mailed to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.



Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

**Prohibition on the use of federal funds to promote, support, or advocate for the legalization or practice of prostitution.**

The U.S. Government is opposed to prostitution and related activities, which are inherently harmful and dehumanizing, and contribute to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons. None of the funds made available under this agreement may be used to promote, support, or advocate the legalization or practice of prostitution. Nothing in the preceding sentence shall be construed to preclude assistance designed to ameliorate the suffering of, or health risks to, victims while they are being trafficked or after they are out of the situation that resulted from such victims being trafficked.

The recipient shall insert the foregoing provision in all sub-agreements under this award.

This provision includes express terms and conditions of the agreement and any violation of it shall be grounds for unilateral termination of the agreement by the Department of State prior to the end of its term.

**VI.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements:**

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions."

OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments".

OMB Circular No. A-110 (Revised), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations.

OMB Circular No. A-102, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments.

OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>.

<http://fa.statebuy.state.gov>

VI.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

1. Performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period.

(Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The performance reports (PPR) must be submitted electronically to the Grants Office at [reportseca@state.gov](mailto:reportseca@state.gov) with a copy sent

to the Program Officer. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at:

<http://www.dpm.psc.gov/> . Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.

2. A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all program performance reports.
3. A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
4. A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.
5. Quarterly program and financial report guidelines will be sent once an award is made

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their

regular program reports. (Please refer to IV. Application and Submission Instructions (IV.3.d.3) above for Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

All reports must be sent to the ECA Grants Office and ECA Program Officer listed in the final assistance award document.

#### VII. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Jennifer Phillips, U.S. Department of State, Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY/T, SA-5, C2-K17, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, tel. 202-632-9352, PhillipsJA@state.gov.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the above title and number ECA/PE/C/PY-12-33.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

**VIII. Other Information:****Notice:**

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative.

Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding.

Issuance of the RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section VI.3 above.

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Ann Stock

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Date

Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs  
Department of State

**VIII. Other Information:**

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J. Adam Ereli

Date

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

U.S. Department of State